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ABSTRACT

An analysis of women's roles in education is presented. The paper addresses three basic themes about educational management and women: why women should go into educational management; what women bring to educational management; and how more women can be encouraged to go into educational management. The paper suggests that women should have equal access to power and resources, that women bring a different style of management to education--one that fosters relationships and growth--and that women who go into education should have a clear career plan that helps them to become school leaders. Two ways that more women can be led into education management entail encouraging them formally through good professional-development structures that include "women-friendly" management-development courses and developing a system that requires women to encourage each other more informally through networking. The paper suggests that education that is managed by women will be differently managed; their collaborative style will pay attention to teamwork, consensus, and empowerment, all of which reflect the educational values of many women teachers. (RJM)

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(WOMEN AND) EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Introduction - the European context for women in educational management

First, I want to focus on two important points about the background for educational management in Europe:

1. Women Teach and Men Manage

There are many statistics published which make it clear that in general there are more women teachers than men teachers. In certain countries of Europe, these women teachers are mainly to be found in primary schools. ***Context***, issue 12, shows that between 75% and 90% of primary school teachers are women in Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. In some ways, this statistic is an easy one to explain because it means that teaching in primary schools is accepted as women's work. So, teaching small children becomes an activity that women are expected to be able to perform almost intuitively, because it is seen as sharing the same skills as mothering. In this way, the professionalism and expertise necessary for the breadth of work expected from those who work with such young people is negated, *and* the work is usually less well paid than managing primary schools or secondary school teaching. Adler, Laney and Packer (1993) write:

> Often the 'feminization' of teaching has been blamed for women's relative lack of status and pay. Teaching children is associated with motherhood, marriage and the caring aspects of femininity.
>
> (Page 22)

But in the same countries as those listed above, there are more than twice as many men *managing* primary schools as women - women teach and men manage. It is as if women are needed for direct work with children because of their built-in mothering qualities, but men are needed (and better paid therefore because they earn more money as managers) when adult decisions are needed. Although on the whole teaching is women's work, and done more by women than men, education is more likely to be managed by men - policy is framed, decisions are made, and plans are drawn up by men for women to put into operation.

As the statistics go up the age phases, women hold positions of even lower status.

In other words, the older the learner the more prestigious the teaching, and so it is more likely that the work will be done by men. In 14 countries represented in the article in ***Context***, on average 40% of teachers in secondary schools are women, but women make up between 10% and 30% of secondary school leaders. And in none of the countries quoted are more than 20% of professors women - usually there are between 3% and 10%.

2. European Education Entering the Market Place

Julia Evetts (1994) writes in the book about her research into secondary school headship in the UK that

> changes to the headteacher role currently under way in England might result in even fewer women applying and being successful in the competition for headteacher posts. If the new headteacher is required to be competitive, efficient and accountable, developing assertive and task-centred leadership styles, then such changes to the headteacher role might prove to be unattractive to many women (as well as to many men) teachers. Such changes might exacerbate rather then decrease gender differences in the achievement of head teacher posts.
>
> (page 48)

The changes Julia Evetts refers to here are the political and economic changes discernable in many parts of the world. Schooling and education are happening within a context of dwindling resources in western countries, vast political change, and the embrace by many politicians (who fight educationists for greater control over education systems) of notions of public services as saleable commodities.

Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe in their introduction to (1995) ***Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*** write:

> the market solution (to just about anything) currently holds politicians around the world in its thrall. We should not be surprised by this, for the market provided politicians with all the benefits of being seen to act decisively and very few of the problems of being blamed when things go wrong - because, so the theory goes, the market is a mechanism which produces its own order ... The forces of the market will out, the good will survive, the weak will go to the wall, and everyone will be better off than before.

In this paper, and in this context, I would like to address three basic themes about educational management and women:

- Why women should go into Educational Management
- What women bring to educational management
- How we can encourage more women into educational management

Why should women go into educational management?

It may be that the statistics in ***Context*** are well-known and accepted without question. It is perhaps taken for granted by many people that women make better teachers and men make better managers. But I have problems with these assumptions for several reasons which I sometimes find hard to articulate because they are so deeply and firmly embedded in me:

- one is of simple equity - I believe that women should have the same access to power and resources as men;

- another is of style - I believe that generally women manage differently from men, and that they bring a clearer set of values about developing and supporting colleagues and a closer understanding of interpersonal relationships than many men do. Their greater involvement with the management of education in Europe will bring benefit to all of the continent's education systems;

- yet another is about role models - how will boys and girls and men and women ever begin to understand that women can take positions of power and work with them effectively but differently from men, if they do not have the opportunity to be led by many good women?

What do women bring to educational management?

I have written elsewhere (Gold 1996) about an interesting evolution which has taken place over the last twenty years in descriptions of management and leadership styles. Mainstream literature about education management published in the 1970's and early 1980's appeared to take no account of gender. Continuums were often drawn up to demonstrate how managers might move between autocratic and democratic leadership. They were positioned on the continuum by such influences as their values, the responses of those they managed, the ethos of the organisation, and what it was that was to be managed, among other things. No clear links were made between the ways men managed and women managed and no direct reference was made to whether there was a general "clumping" of men towards the authoritarian end, and women towards the democratic end. But somehow, the differences were taken for granted, probably because women managers were such a small group that they were almost invisible.

In the middle to late 1980's, there was a proliferation of management literature based on research which looked at the differences in the ways that men and

women managed organisations. Ten years later, some of these conclusions seem simplistic. Women's management styles were characterised as more responsive to the moral high ground because they were concerned with involving those they managed in procedures such as decision-making processes, but women did not come out of this literature with particularly effective or professional reputations. This was because the profiles into which they were fitted often made it seem as though they could not make decisions without reference to many other people - too reactive and time-consuming; and they could not be assertive because they were too busy being understanding and supportive. In a sense, women were seen as too "soft" and ineffective to manage large organisations. And the skills and attributes seen as important were connected with organisational efficiency and technical excellence - the skills necessary to do timetables and to develop management systems, and to win were reified.

These profiles were often too rigid, and also seemed to encompass all women, making no allowance for any notion that some men manage sensitively, and some women manage in a dominating and authoritarian fashion. They also placed women in a deficit model by taking for granted that the management skills that many of them appeared to have developed would not fit them to manage the education systems in which they worked.

Diana Leonard (1996) describes university management in the late 1990's in a way that explains why many women do not take part in it: she describes the required style of management as "technical". In Technical Management, the central concerns are about national competitiveness, universities as enterprises, quality and effectiveness. The type of leadership most suited to these central concerns is rational/technicist, where the leader drags the reluctant academic forward, and where line management is supreme. Students are positioned as clients to be serviced, and the relationship of the academy to the state is that of policy-making as a separate and distinct phase, and the implementation of policy as a rational, neutral process. Accountability is very important in technical management styles, and the central state controls accountability by external evaluation: research and teaching are measured against 'objective' criteria, and are tied to budgets. I think that people involved in all sectors of education recognise most of these concerns.

Writing about management styles published in the mid-1990's seems to be far more realistic and helpful to others working in the field because it introduces new descriptors for managers. I am referring, for example, to the work of Valerie Hall: ***Dancing on the Ceiling***, published in 1996, is a study of women managers in education. She writes that the intention of her book "is not to prove that ... similarities are the consequences of gender, but to show how gender has an impact on leadership behaviour in the context of education, by focusing on women's experiences" (page 16).

• Valerie Hall finds ways of describing managing education organisations which allow women to enter the discourses of management in the late 1990's while clearly retaining their values:

> A picture emerges of women heads enacting strong leadership within a collaborative framework. In spite of this, the women heads ... were firmly committed to the belief that sharing leadership still required them to take the lead when appropriate, including having a personal vision for the school. They saw themselves (and were seen) as key players, co-ordinating, developing and using others' efforts to the benefit of the school's purpose.
>
> (page 190)

Some recent writers about gendered management cultures have tried to empower women managers by repositioning them. They write to explore ways that women managers can make discourses of management fit the ways they want to manage. Jill Blackmore (1993), in Australia, writes about the necessity to

> actively intervene in the play of the discourse itself. This requires women working within bureaucracies and organisations to learn to recognise in the discourses the ways in which they, as women, are being positioned in relation to others, as being failures, marginal or peripheral. Learning to recognise the contexts and situations in which this occurs, and grappling with 'habitual discursive practices' opens up the possibility of rejecting or accepting the discourse or positioning.
>
> (page 88)

So, on the whole women managers in education bring an ability to develop and share a vision, a commitment to collaborative decision-making, and a view of themselves as co-ordinators who develop and encourage others to the benefit of all. But they do not often recognise these attributes as those necessary for education management in the context of the late 20th century. In Britain at least, the education market place appears to encourage in school leaders a competitiveness and a valuing of efficiency that many women feel are alien to their ways of operating. And these ways of working are certainly alien to the values many people first brought to teaching when they entered the profession.

How can we encourage more women into education management?

Conversations with groups of teachers and managers in the UK have clarified for me that while on the whole, men enter teaching with career plans which will eventually make them school leaders, women usually enter teaching without a career map, and initially they focus on becoming good teachers. Women often

only become leaders in education when they have been managed by someone younger or less effective than themselves, or else they just drift into it. Sometimes, it is suggested to them that they should apply for promotion by a more senior educationalist whose professional opinion they value. However they embark on the journey eventually, they do not usually begin it with active plans for their future.

It seems that sponsorship and mentoring are very important in encouraging new women school leaders - women in particular seem to need encouragement from professionals they respect in order to see themselves as future managers. Here I would like to explore two specific ways of encouraging more women into management in education. There are others, but these are the two I want to talk about today. One depends on others encouraging them formally through good professional development structures which include "women-friendly" management development courses, and the other requires women to encourage each other more informally through networking.

1. "Women-friendly" Management Development Programmes

In Britain, the teacher appraisal programme in schools was welcomed by teachers' unions when it was first introduced. It was recognised as potentially an empowering system which would enable teachers to talk with their managers in an enabling and professional way about their work and about their future professional development. The agreed targets for future development often included the attendance at some sort of course. This is not the place for an evaluation of that system, or even a *post mortem* of it. I just wish to use it as an example of a way that more or less formal discussions about professional development have gradually become part of the agenda for teachers.

In the UK, it is becoming more usual that head teachers have taken part in some management development work on their way to their leadership posts. Indeed, the UK government is in the process of introducing management qualifications for head teachers. The most important loci for the encouragement for those people who are unsure about the suitability their qualities and skills for leadership will be firstly in applying to take part in the prospective headteacher assessment and development scheme, and then later on in the process having embarked on the programmes, in ensuring that they "fit" the discourse of the pedagogy employed. I wish to argue here that the pedagogy of management development programmes should be planned to "fit" all participants, and not vice versa. If we are to have more women in education management, they must be encouraged and they should have their professional skills and qualities recognised and reinforced. One of the most obvious places for this validation to take place is on management development courses.

What do I mean by "women-friendly" management development programmes? There is some very interesting writing, some of it coming from America, by such women as Magda Gere Lewis (1993) and bell hooks (1994), about the way the teaching in higher education often silences women, people from ethnic minorities, and those people who do not feel themselves to be part of the white male middle class academic discourse. I too have thought and written (Gold, (1995)) about this silencing of many women in university classrooms, but rather than quote writing, I would like to describe a disturbing example I came across four months ago. I can best describe a "women-friendly" course by introducing some "women-*un*friendly" sessions!

I teach an MA module called "Women and Educational Management". One evening each week for ten weeks this summer term, I had the pleasure and honour of running seminars for 16 women teachers, some of whom were headteachers or senior managers in education, some of whom were middle managers, and some of whom were not managers and were taking the opportunity to decide whether they wished to become managers or not. It is important to remember that they were doing this course as a part of a modular MA, so they came from seven different MAs. Some of these women already had MAs (at least one of them with a distinction), and all of them were engaged in highly responsible work in the daytime. One of our sessions explored whether women learn differently from men and whether they therefore respond to a different pedagogy in the adult classroom. The subsequent session was used partly to talk about the coursework to be completed for the course I was teaching. First it became apparent that several of these capable and professionally accomplished women were reluctant to write. Those who had ideas about coursework were offering the ideas apologetically, and only a few of them appeared to be confident about their scholarship and writing. On further discussion, and with reference to the session on women as learners, it became clear that many of them had had experiences in previous MA modules which had utterly de-skilled them.

Many of their previous lecturers were men, but not all; many of them certainly shared classrooms with men. Many of these women spend their days writing reports and managing far more complex activities than completing their MAs. So what was it that had happened to them as learners? Between them, they listed the following teaching activities which seemed to exclude them from what was going on:

- For some of them, whole three-hour sessions were taken up by a formal lecture each time, leaving little time for students to discuss or to clarify issues raised by the lecture. This model of transmission of knowledge is based on a premise that the teacher has knowledge and information that must be passed on to the passive learner. The learners then have little help

with internalising the learning, and can often find it difficult to make sense of the information - they are thus made to feel inept and sometimes stupid.

- Transmission of knowledge in this form allows little opportunity for the teacher to base information on the experience of the learner. Thus the learner's professional experience is ignored, and even nullified. Women, especially, often do not recognise that they have relevant skills and experience until they are valued by other people. If the knowledge transmitted ignores their experience, then that experience is not valued by anyone.

- Those people who are new to or uncomfortable with a dominant discourse need encouragement, and time, to enter that discourse. In other words, women who have been brought up to be quiet, reflective and even reticent need space and time to find a way of joining in discussions. Their apparent reluctance to join in is often seen as lack of ability, rather than a socially constructed way of operating.

- The academic discourse is often one of long and complicated jargon which is impenetrable to all but committed academics. In this way, quite simple ideas are difficult to access for non-academics, and so those who can make sense of them - who speak the language - can be seen as different from and better than those who have difficulty. But the ideas are not particularly profound, just obfuscated! In other words, the academic analysis of what these women regularly do successfully in their professional lives - managing educational organisations - is framed in a way that they have difficulty understanding, and they are often demotivated by their failure to understand.

- There seems to be a convention about MA coursework which combines all the most frightening aspects of academia, and makes the writing as remote as possible from the reality of that which is to be studied. This separation of writing from the activity that most benefits from the reflection that writing can bring, negates the actor's part in the equation. Feminist writing has long held that the personal is political. The most exciting and effective coursework I have read nearly always starts from personal/professional experience, and uses readings and theoretical frameworks to make sense of that experience in order to change or develop it further.

- Several of the women round the table found the sessions they attended just plain boring! If there is not space to make sense of the lecture, to argue about it and to attach it to the student's reality; if the student's reality is negated by the lecture which makes no reference to a recognisable way of

being; if the required writing cannot be personalised in any way, then it is difficult to be excited by the teaching.

I know that one of the workshops later this morning is going to explore management training, and I hope that these points will help to focus that exploration. I would just like to offer the following suggestions when planning management development programmes which intend to encourage women. I wrote them (Gold 1996) with Kolb's (1984) cycle of experiential learning in mind:

- The combination of different types of learning activities (including inputs, small group tasks, large group discussions, working in pairs, and role play) means that the learning is interactive - the dominance of the teacher is reduced, and the importance of the learner is increased, so learners feel more effective.

- It is helpful if the facilitator spends time at the beginning of sessions developing an ethos that encourages *all* attempts to enter and negotiate the discourses of education management being framed during the course.

- Validation of the experience of participants encourages confidence - often the experiences and professional judgements they describe are more worthwhile than they realise until they describe them.

- Kolb's model offers the opportunity to find different ways of making sense of an experience, and acknowledges that there can be different solutions - there is no right or wrong solution, there are just ones that fit certain situations more clearly, depending on values and circumstances.

- Encouragement to reflect means that answers do not have to be instantaneous and perfectly articulated. Permission is thus given for question-asking and time to think, and for discussion with others in order to frame possible solutions.

- Programmes planned in such a way model successful education management - there are different solutions to problems which can be negotiated respectfully and carefully by teams and groups, after sufficient attention has been paid to the people and stakeholders involved, and to the basic aims of the organisation.

2. Networking

There are complex ethical questions attached to networking. Although I am sure that women must support each other and mentor each other into and through management roles, there are important issues to be remembered about networking.

And the first issue is that men have always networked and women don't like it when men network! Those who spend their professional lives addressing questions of equity find it very difficult to commit themselves to taking part in excluding activities. But if exclusive activities enable power sharing activities - and if through networking more women are encouraged to work well in education management - they must be promoted.

Support groups sometimes spring up to support the micropolitical activities which offer alternative sources of power when official decision-making channels are ineffective. Such support groups should signal to managers that members of the organisation feel as though they have no voice. They signify the need for re-organisation in order to return to a more democratic organisation.

The networking that many women professionals recommend are what Weiner (1994) calls "contact and communication networks", which are critical in encouraging innovation and reform (page 89). Networks like these were so effective in the 1980's in putting equal opportunities on the agenda in schools and classrooms. They gave strength to members of the groups to resist dominant discourses of masculinity and autocracy, and they passed information around, in order to empower members.

Networking for a clearly articulated purpose - to encourage more women into educational management - demands time, commitment, and agreed groundrules. It is important that such networks keep to frameworks that are developed by their members. In this way, membership will be seen to be worthwhile, supportive and productive, rather than depressing, competitive and secretive.

To conclude:

So, we need more women in educational management - the reasons are simple, fundamental and ethically sound. And education that is managed by more women will be differently managed - the collaborative style which pays attention to teamwork, consensus and empowerment reflects the educational values of many women teachers.

But, women need encouragement to apply for headship, and support once they get there in order to manage in ways that they respect. That encouragement to apply for headship can be found in attendance on management development programmes which are planned with attention to "women-friendly" pedagogy. The support can be found in carefully set-up networks for women in management in education.

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